

WASHINGTON.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1891.

CROSBY & NOYES, Editors.

THE EVENING STAR has a regular and permanent column in Washington three times larger than that of any other paper in the city. As a local news paper and Advertising Medium it has no competitor.

The new Congress is so very new, so largely composed of men who appear in Washington for the first time, that the capital needs, perhaps, to impress upon the body, especially the newcomers, with more than the customary emphasis the fact that Congress is not only the national legislature but is, under the constitutional provision concerning exclusive legislation for the ten miles square, the board of aldermen and common council for Washington. It is the legally appointed guardian of the capital's affairs, and cannot neglect its duty without a breach of trust. There is much to be done legislatively for the development of the nation's city. Current needs, increasing in respect to schools, fire and police service, etc., with the growth of the community, are, of course, to be met. Our antiquated statutes must be revised. The necessity of a prompt extension of the general plan of city streets over the whole District is generally recognized. A comprehensive and adequate sewerage system is to be provided. The report of the commission appointed to consider this subject furnishes the necessary data for action, and Capt. Lusk in his annual report shows that he intelligently appreciates the demands of the city situation and is determined to be cleared of the overhead wires and threatening poles. The report of the commission to whom the duty of investigating into and reporting upon this subject was intrusted supplies a mass of information to guide Congress toward intelligent legislation in the matter. The terminal facilities of the railroads woefully need improvement, both in the matter of protection of the public and best of the city and in the freight service rendered the business men of Washington. In the same connection Long bridge needs to be raised and practically rebuilt if it is to be retained as a railroad bridge. A new structure across the Potomac, say to Arlington, is a necessity of the future Washington, whether the long bridge be elevated and changed in form of construction or abandoned altogether. Both surface and underground Washington are to be developed upon lines which will make the city the model modern capital. For its intellectual well-being, for the benefit of the workingmen, students and teachers of the public schools and the community in general Washington needs a free public library, open in the evening, of the kind which has advocated and will continue to advocate. It is possible to mention at this time only a few of the matters in respect to which the capital needs attention from its legislature. Enough, however, has been suggested to indicate that our local legislature cannot, if faithful to its trust, drift into a do-nothing policy in respect to the city of the future.

The President's letter of instructions to department heads concerning promotions and the annual report of the civil service commission have, each, a wide interest as marking progressive steps in the reform. The President had heretofore suggested, in his message to the first session of the Fifty-first Congress, that the heads of executive departments keep a record in each bureau and that a rating be made showing the relative merits of the clerks of each class, to be regarded as a test of merit for promotions. In some departments this has been done. He now directs that a plan be devised in all the departments for carrying out this system of record and promotion. The civil service commission's report includes a summary history of the examinations, etc., and a discussion of the principle of competition, its advantages and its practical application. Reference is made to the extension of the classified service and important changes in the rules—features heretofore adverted to in THE STAR and which have met with general approval. The commission expresses themselves as entirely satisfied with the way in which the civil service law has been enforced in the departmental service at Washington, and say that the question of politics has been practically eliminated in making removals and appointments. Special reference is made to the filling of the quotas of the southern states. A fair proportion of colored men from those states has been appointed. An examination of the list is gratifying to every friend of the merit system and good government.

The speaker's conduct in the Fifty-second Congress is likely to go to history as one of the famous struggles of the last fifty years. The lively balloting of the democratic caucus has excited widespread interest, the issues being raised of personal and political matters and the hopes of minor candidates entering more largely than usual into the calculations. The importance of the decision to the dominant party in the House is not exaggerated. The influence of the Speaker is not exaggerated. The political situation is delicate. The long and arduous presidential campaign, with the country nearly equally divided and with independent elements to be considered, is well calculated to try the mettle of the two parties and to develop their leadership qualities. What issues—what men—how far to go—what to leave undone—no wonder there is heated controversy and difference of opinion where the opposite is desirable. No wonder there are numerous beliefs and anxious consultations and balancing of chances.

The abolition of the bar room that has stood next to the Police Court has already proved beneficial. It is also an easier matter to say "Get thee behind me" when Satan is at hand, and some of the witnesses who are supposed to furnish power to the wheels of justice are not possessed of a degree of moral courage not possessed even by the slight advantage insignificant. Occasional "Get thee behind me" of the attorneys showed the effects of the "Get thee behind me" of the court. The absence of the Police Court saloon is one that will be sweetly felt.

The meeting of the democratic executive committee of the national committee in this city tomorrow is of interest because it will call attention of the full committee to the fact that the meeting of the national convention of that party. Among the prominent places named for the honor are Boston and New York in the east and St. Paul and Detroit in the west. The choice made from either group would indicate, probably, whether the democrats favor most in the east or west for most in the west.

The cooking school will serve a noble purpose if it comes the preparation of food to be regarded as a sort of gastronomic fine art, as it is desired to be, instead of being degraded as a menial domestic duty.

"How happy could I be with either, were I either dearer away." By the democratic members to Messrs. Mills and Crosby.

It has been a beautiful spectacle, that of the speakership contest lingering in the lap of the Fifty-second Congress.

If Uncle Sam gets a first-rate navy Chile's discretion will not have been without its beneficial side.

New York doesn't even say "please" when she puts in her bid for the democratic convention.

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